





GOD IS LOVE.

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WHOSO RECEIVETH ONE SUCH LITTLE CHILD  
IN MY NAME, RECEIVETH ME.

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TWO SERMONS

PREACHED

(WITH THE SANCTION OF THE LORD BISHOP)

IN THE

CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY,  
*ILFRACOMBE,*

IN BEHALF OF

A NEW CHURCH, AND OF THE PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS,

ON THE TENTH AND TWELFTH SUNDAYS AFTER TRINITY, 1844.

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BY THE

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TO THE  
RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD  
HENRY  
LORD BISHOP OF EXETER,  
THE FOLLOWING SERMONS ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,  
WITH THE EARNEST PRAYER  
THAT HIS ZEAL FOR THE POOR OF CHRIST  
MAY BE RETURNED INTO HIS OWN BOSOM  
IN GIFTS OF GRACE HERE  
AND IN MERCY AND LOVING-KINDNESS  
IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.



1 JOHN iv. 16, 17.

*God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.*

VERY awful, in nature or in grace, is the exceeding nearness of God. By nature, we know that we are encompassed by God, "for in Him," saith the Apostle, "we live and move and have our being." We see not the air by which we are surrounded, we often are scarcely sensible of it, unless God give it power to oppress or to refresh us; we are surrounded by God, yet we see Him not; yea, men can even be chastened or refreshed by Him, yet know Him not. And yet nearer is He than the very air we breathe within us; for *it* is but His creature to uphold our life, our being is in Him. It is, at most, the breath of our bodies; He is the life of our souls, the Spirit of our spirits.

But nearer and more awful yet is His nearness by Grace. We speak, as if we knew wherefore we spake, of Grace, and Love, and Righteousness, and while we speak, we forget of Whom we speak. For what is man's Righteousness, but Christ Himself? or Grace, but His Indwelling Spirit, shed abroad within the heart? or Love, but God? Herein is the

exceeding love of God, not only that He has made and remade us; not only that, being sinners, He accounts us righteous, but that He is our Righteousness; not that He gives us strength, out of Himself, but that Himself is our strength within us. In this the Psalmists rejoiced of old, not only that God gave, but that He Himself is “our refuge and strength,” our defence and our peace, our salvation and our glory, the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever<sup>a</sup>. And what the Holy Ghost meant by these their words, we understand better than they themselves did, for *they* searched what or what manner of thing the Spirit which was in them did signify; we know its fulness; for we know that He Who became our salvation, and Who shall be the glory of His Elect, hath not left His own as orphans here, but has come again, as He promised, by His Spirit, to dwell in them and they in Him. And if He dwell in us, as Holy Scripture saith, then His gifts and graces are not separate from Himself, or from that first great Gift, His Spirit; they are part of His life in us. As the fruit has in it of the life of the plant, and withers, if that life be checked, so are “the fruits of the Spirit,” begun, nourished, enlarged, if so be, perfected in us, by the continual Presence of His Life, His own indwelling, in the soul. They are outward forms of His Life within. This His indwelling is the greatness of our privilege and our

<sup>a</sup> Ps. xiv. 6. xvi. 5. xxvii. 1. xxviii. 7. xlv. 1. lxii. 8. xlviii. 3. lix. 9, 17. lxii. 7. lxxiii. 26. xci. 2, 9. cxviii. 14. cxix. 57, 114, &c.



awe. It is, as a truth of nature, the most awful character of sin, that all sin is done not against only, but within, God, since “in,” within, “Him,” encompassed by Him, “we live and move;” sin in Christians is more awful yet, in that it is wrought not only against God as without us, but as grieving the very Presence of the Spirit within us. This, as far as He frees us from sin, and we have, through His grace, willed to be free, is our glory and joy, that we are not our own; our actions, as far as they are good, are not our own; our love, our light, our understanding, our wills, our gifts, our graces, our deeds of holiness and love, are not our own, but His within us. “We groan being burthened,” saith the Apostle, but “our groaning” for our heavenly home, the very fainting of our minds, the weakness, as it seems, as well as the strength of our spirits, is His; they are the “unutterable groanings<sup>b</sup>” of the Spirit; He, the True Light, is the light of our minds, and what we see, we see through His light within us; we think, but He informeth the mind; we speak, but if the words be good, it is “the Spirit of our Father which speaketh in<sup>c</sup>” us; we act, but if the actions be good, they “are wrought *in* God,” and He “hath wrought all our works in us<sup>d</sup>.” Nay, we ourselves are conscious of this. Cometh a holier thought into our souls, we know that it is not from us: cometh a gush of devotion upon us, it descends upon us and masters and overfloweth us, and beareth us along, and we are

<sup>b</sup> Rom. viii. 26.

<sup>c</sup> Matt. x. 20.

<sup>d</sup> Joh. iii. 21. Is. xxvi. 12.

conscious only to ourselves that we are sluggish and heavy, with difficulty upborne by its tide : cometh a ray of light upon us, it flashes and lightens up our souls, but is not of us : are we borne along to some more devoted action ? the impulse, we feel, is within us, not of us ; we yield to it, give up our wills to it, but from us it came not : are we melted into tears at the thought of our Saviour's love, we know that, of ourselves, we might have stood cold and dry even at the foot of that dread Tree, unless His Eye had fallen upon us, and "melted" our icy hearts "that the waters flowed : " do our hearts burn within us, we feel that His words have kindled them, "as He talked with us by the way : " are we, in deep sorrow, upborne, and rest calmly on the surface of the waves ? we know, by its very unearthliness, that the deep calm is not our own, but that He hath shed His peace, yea, He Himself "*is our Peace*" within us, and holds all our powers in suspense, bound up and resting upon Him.

Our spirits, then, bear witness to us, that what we have, we have not of ourselves, but of God ; but to the deep truth they could not witness, that not only are all our powers thus set in motion or at rest, kindled, enlightened, directed, lulled, softened, strengthened, by Him, but that He doth it, not as He said, "Let there be light, and there was light," but by being Himself within and without us, above, beneath, around us ; Himself enfolding us on all sides and

wrapping us round as a robe<sup>f</sup>, since we “have put on Christ;” Himself within us, since “Christ dwells in our hearts by faith;” Himself the Abode wherein we dwell, and the Indweller; for “whoso dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

Nor is this love our own; how should it, since it is Himself? for “God is Love.” This is the exceeding amazingness of His love, that the very power whereby we love is His, is Himself. It is not only that “we love Him, *because* He first loved us,” not as though we *must* love Him Who hath so loved us; but further still, because He has given us the love wherewith we love Him, because “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” “The love of God shed abroad” within us, is the Presence of God within us, for “God is Love<sup>g</sup>,” and whereas the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are alike Love, it has been thought by holy men<sup>h</sup> that as in some special

<sup>f</sup> S. Chrys. Hom. xxiv. in Rom. xiii. 14. “He giveth us the Lord Himself, the King Himself, for a garment. For whoso is clad all round with Him, hath absolutely all virtue. But saying, ‘Put ye on,’ he biddeth us be clad all around with Him on every side, as he saith elsewhere, ‘If Christ be in you,’ (and Eph. iii. 16, 17.) For He willeth that our soul should be a house for Him, and Himself to encompass us as a cloke, that He may be all to us, within and without—the House and the Indweller, ‘for he that dwelleth in Me and I in him;’” (more fully p. 409. Oxf. Tr.) S. Aug. in Ep. Joh. Tr. ix. “Be God thy House, and be thou the house of God; abide in God and let God abide in thee.”

<sup>g</sup> “So truly is Love the gift of God, that It is called God.” S. Aug. Ep. 186.

<sup>h</sup> S. Aug. de Trin. xv. 17. §. 31, add vi. §. 7. and in Ep. Joh. Tr. 7. §. 4—6.

way the Son is called "the Wisdom of God" while yet the Father and the Son are also Wisdom, so also in some special way the Holy Ghost is Love; for Scripture says not only "God is Love," but "love is *of* God," God proceeding from God; and whereas it saith, "Whoso dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him," it saith again, "Hereby we know that we dwell in Him and He in us, from the Spirit which He hath given us," so that the love whereby we dwell in God and God in us, is His Indwelling Spirit. Such is the depth of the mystery of the Incarnation, that God would, in our degree, give us all which is His. His very Being is Love. He loved ever His Coequal, Coeternal Son, by the Spirit, Who is the Love and Bond of Both; He loveth the Human Nature of His Son, as joined in One Person with the Son of His love; and now He loveth us as joined on to Him Whom He loveth everlastingly<sup>i</sup>. And that we may love Him, He hath given us His Spirit, that Spirit of Love, in Whom the Everlasting Father loved His Coeternal Son, so that He Who is the Bond of Both<sup>k</sup>, by Whom the Father loveth the Son and the Son the

<sup>i</sup> "He loveth the Son according to the Godhead, because He begat Him Equal with Himself; He loveth Him according to that He is Man, because the Only-Begotten 'Word' Himself 'was made Flesh,' and for the sake of the Word, the Flesh of the Word is dear unto Him; but us He loveth, because we are His members Whom He loveth, and that we might be such, He loved us before we were." S. Aug. Tr. 110. in S. Joh. §. 5.

<sup>k</sup> S. Aug. Serm. ad pop. 71. (21. Oxf. Tr.) §. 18.



Father, Himself Coequal and Coeternal God, should be the Bond of our love with the Father and with one another. For if we have the Spirit of Christ, then have we Christ dwelling in us, then are we, He hath said, the dwelling-place of the Trinity, since He has said, "If a man love Me he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him<sup>1</sup>." Yea, so doth He interchange with us, that He speaketh as if it were the same thing, that He should dwell in us, or we in Him; we in Him the Infinite or He in us the finite; we lost, yet existing still, in the boundless Ocean of His love, or His overflowing love enlarging the narrow mansions of our hearts, that It may fill them with Itself. "Whoso dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Oh, thought beyond all thought. Oh, "the length and breadth and depth and height" of the love of God, the fourfold measure of the Cross of Christ, the depth, saith one<sup>m</sup>, in humility, the length in long-suffering, the breadth in all-embracing charity, the height in eternity, which not only stooped to behold us where we lay, but came down to us, became as one of us, that we might be like Him; ascended where He was before,

<sup>1</sup> S. John xiv. 23.

<sup>m</sup> The meaning of the fourfold measure of the Cross is often spoken of by S. Aug. e. g. Ep. 140. §. 63, 64. Serm. 53. (23. Oxf. Tr.) §. 15, 16. S. 165, 3. 4. &c. chiefly with reference to man.

to send down the Spirit Who is Love", and by Himself and His indwelling love, as in a chariot of fire, bear us up unto Himself, from earth to heaven.

Well then may "love" be the first of the gifts of the Spirit, from which all others flow, the one fountain, gushing out from Paradise, and with its fourfold streams encompassing the whole earth, and enriching and blessing it with countless fruits; and the law and the prophets hang on it, yea itself be "the fulfilling of the law", since it flows forth from Him Who gave the law, and the law is but a fence against the lawless love of self, the enemy of true love; well may it "cover the multitude of sins", since His "love is a fire consuming all sin", and whoso "loveth much is much forgiven;" and it alone dares to say the prayer for forgiveness, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Well may it be greater than hope and faith, since faith shall pass into vision, and hope which is seen is no longer hope, but love must abide for ever, since it is from God and to God, and "God is Love." And so, if we have love, shall we

<sup>n</sup> "Truly the Lord ascended into the heavens, that He might be higher than the heavens and send down charity." S. Aug. in Ps. 103. §. 10.

<sup>o</sup> Rom. xiii. 10. see S. Aug. Tr. 17. in S. Joh. §. 6. &c. S. Chrys. Hom. 77. init. Hom. 2. de S. Pentec. §. 3. S. Hil. in S. Matt. iv. §. 19. S. Ambr. in Ps. 118. lit. 16. §. 44.

<sup>p</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 8. "Love alone extinguisheth sins." S. Aug. in Ep. S. Joh. i. 6. add Tr. 5. §. 3.

<sup>q</sup> "There is none, absolutely no, sin, which the power of love, as fire, consumeth not." S. Chrys. in Ep. 1. ad Thess. Hom. iv. 4.

“have boldness in the Day of Judgment,” for He, our Judge, has given love as the one mark, for which He shall own His sheep; with love we could not perish, since where love is, there is God, and where God is, there is Heaven; and to “enter into our Master’s joy,” what is it, but to enter into the fulness of that love, which His saints have here but touched, as it were, for little moments, with the extremity of their spirits<sup>r</sup>, what is it but to be immersed, absorbed, inglorified, in the transfiguring purity and brightness of His love? “If we love<sup>s</sup>, believing and not seeing, how shall we love, when we see and possess” God?

Love then is the sign of life, our safety in Sacraments<sup>t</sup>, the mark of Christ’s disciples, the beginning and ending, the mother and foundation of all virtues, the earnest of the Spirit, inviting and waiting for Its fulness. Martyrdom without love were death of the soul; faith the confession of devils; sacraments were received to our hurt; miracles a testimony against us; the tongues of Angels a tinkling cymbal; the knowledge of mysteries a swelling vanity; but love, as it cannot

<sup>r</sup> See S. Aug. Conf. ix. 10. Oxf. Tr.

<sup>s</sup> “Si enim amamus, cum non videmus, quomodo amplectemur cum viderimus.” S. Aug. in Ep. Joh. Tr. v. 7. “If It thus delighteth us when strangers, how shall we rejoice, when in our home!” ib. x. 8. “Never shall we cease loving God, but the more we gaze upon Him, so much the more shall we love Him.” S. Iren. 4. 12. 2.

<sup>t</sup> sacramentorum salus. S. Aug.

be without faith<sup>u</sup>, so it gives or replaces knowledge, or wisdom, or speech, or, (if they be not unlovingly laid aside,) even Sacraments themselves, for “ God is Love.”

To tell what that love should be, would be to say what God is Who gives it, for had we that love fully, we should be wholly perfect. Fitter for such as me to say what are the beginnings of it, if so be God may give the increase, that “ nourished<sup>x</sup> and growing, being perfected, it may perfect you ;” for in the same father’s words, “ Love begun, is righteousness begun ; love advanced, is advanced righteousness ; great love, great righteousness ; perfect love, were perfect righteousness<sup>y</sup> ;—though I marvel

<sup>u</sup> “ Have faith with love, for love ye cannot have without faith. This I admonish, exhort, teach in the Name of the Lord, whom I love, have faith with love, for ye may have faith without love. I exhort you not, to have faith. For ye cannot have love without faith, love, I mean, of God and your neighbour.” S. Aug. Serm. 90. (40. Oxf. Tr.) §. 8. “ This is that ‘ goodly pearl’ charity, without which whatsoever thou mayest have ‘ profiteth thee nothing ;’ which, if thou hast it alone, sufficeth thee.” in Ep. Joh. v. 8.

<sup>x</sup> S. Aug. S. Iren. 4. 12. 2. “ S. Paul teacheth—that love perfecteth the perfect man, and that he who loveth God is perfect both in this world and in that to come.”

<sup>y</sup> S. Aug. de nat. et grat. fin. he adds here, “ but ‘ love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned,’ which is then at its highest in this life, when for it life itself is despised.” comp. de Trin. viii. 8. “ How much the Apostle John commends brotherly love, let us listen ; ‘ Whoso loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no offence in him.’ It is plain that he places the perfection of righteousness in brotherly love, for in whom no offence is, he is perfect.”



if it admit not of increase when it parteth out of this mortal life. Yet when or wheresoever it be thus full, that it can receive no accessions, it is not shed abroad in our hearts by help of nature or our will, but by the Holy Spirit Which is given us, Who both helpeth our weakness, and co-worketh to our healing."

Whereas then this love is two-fold, to God and man, each implies the other<sup>2</sup>, and Holy Scripture sets either for the whole; for if we love God, we must keep His commandment of love; and if we truly love man, what do we love in him but God, or longing that He may be in him? Yet, lest we deceive ourselves, Holy Scripture gives us love for man to begin with, as the sign whether we love God. So our Judge teaches us of the Day of Judgment; so saith He to

<sup>2</sup> S. Chrys. in S. Joh. Hom. 77. init. "Seest thou that the love of God is intertwined with ours, and as it were, one connected chain. Wherefore sometimes He calls them two commands, sometimes one; for if we receive the one, we cannot but have the other." (quoting S. Matt. xxii. 40. vii. 12. and Rom. xiii. 10.) S. Aug. in Ev. Joh. Tr. 65. §. 2. "Think not that in these words of the Lord, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another,' that greater commandment is passed by, that we should 'love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind—for on these two commandments,' He saith, 'hang all the law and the prophets.' But if we understand it rightly, each is found in each. For he who loveth God, cannot despise Him when He commandeth to love our neighbour, and whoso holily and spiritually loveth his neighbour, what loveth he in him, except God?" "Whoso loveth his neighbour must needs chiefly love Love Itself. For God is Love, &c." S. Aug. de Trin. viii. 10. add §. 12. "Can one love God in a brother, and not love Love?—If God is Love, whoever loveth Love, loveth God." in Ep. Joh. Tr. ix. 10.

us, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another." He gives not miracles as the mark of His discipleship; ("many shall say in that day, Have we not in Thy Name done many wonderful works?") not prophecy or eloquent speech, (they shall say, "Have we not prophesied in Thy Name?") not the casting out of devils, not the confession of His Name, (the devils confessed in the same words<sup>a</sup> which St. Peter was taught of the Father, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God;") not prayer, not faith, not love of Himself in Himself, but love of Him in His members; "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Love of God and of man cannot be truly severed, since one Fountain of Love, the Holy Spirit Who is Love, sends forth both; we must love our brethren as He loved us and because He loved us; but the surest proof to us that we have love, is the love of man for Christ's sake. If the house stands, we know that the foundation is there; if the stream flows, we know that the fountain is not dry; if the tree bears fruit, we know that the sap floweth; if man lives, we know that he has the breath of life; if man loves man with the love of God, we know that God hath breathed in him the breath of spiritual life, and that the Spirit of Christ dwelleth in Him, that "he dwelleth in God and God in him." "The love of God," says a holy father<sup>b</sup> out of Holy

<sup>a</sup> S. Aug. Serm. 90. ad pop. (40. §. 8. Oxf. Tr.) §. 8. et al.

<sup>b</sup> S. Aug. in Joh. Tr. 17, 8. "The love of our neighbour is a

Scripture, "is the first in the order of command; the love of our neighbour is first in order of fulfilment. As yet thou seest not God; by loving thy neighbour, thou gainest His favour Whom thou wouldest see, thou purifiest thine eye to see; 'if thou lovest not thy brother whom thou hast seen, how shalt thou love God, whom thou seest not.' " "Love<sup>c</sup> thy brother. For if thou lovest thy brother whom thou seest, thou shalt with him see God, for thou shalt see Love Itself, and God dwelleth within thee." "If<sup>d</sup> charity dwelleth not there, neither does God. If charity dwelleth there, God dwelleth there. Would he see Him sitting in Heaven, let him have charity, and he dwelleth in Him as in Heaven."

Yet love with no common love, not with the love of the world, not with the love of man to man, or natural affection only. Not to love as man, were to be less than man; to be "without natural affection" was of the deepest sins of the heathen. Natural love, while it remains such, (I speak not of the Christian love of parents, which may be of the highest graces, and win bright crowns,) but natural love is, at best, a mere instinct; whenever it is inordinate, it is even opposed to true love. Love, whereby we shall dwell

certain step to the love of God." c. Adim. c. 6. "If to 'abide' cometh from love, and love from keeping the commandment, and the commandment from loving one another, to 'abide in God' cometh from the love to one another." S. Chrys. in Ev. Joh. Hom. 77. 1.

<sup>c</sup> in Ep. Tr. iv. 7.

<sup>d</sup> S. Aug. in Ps. 149. 6.

in God, must be a Divine love. Love, whereby “we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment,” is such; that “as He is, so are we in this world;” “*as* I have loved you,” saith our Blessed Lord, “that ye also love one another.”

How then did Christ love us? “The heighth, and length, and breadth, and depth” of that love is hid in God, Who is Love. But I mean, of what sort was that love, that we “may love *as*” He “loved” us, that we “may be *in* this world, as He is?”

1. It is, as opposed to mere natural love, an all-embracing love, not swayed by feelings or emotions or preferences, but loving all who can be loved, who may be such as can be loved, or that they may be loved. The Father loved us not first\*, when Christ had redeemed us, and we were reconciled in Him;

\* “Wherefore the love wherewith God loveth [us] is infinite and unchangeable. For not from such time as we were reconciled to Him by the Blood of His Son, did He begin to love us, but ‘He loved us before the foundation of the world,’ that with the Only-Begotten we too might be His sons, before we were as yet any thing. This then, that ‘we were reconciled unto God through the Death of His Son,’ is not so to be understood, as though the Son reconciled us to Him, so that He should then begin to love whom He had hated; (as enemy is reconciled to enemy, so that they should thereafter be friends and mutually love, having mutually hated;) but we were reconciled to Him already loving us. (quoting Rom. v. 8, 9.)—So then, by a wonderful and Divine manner, He loved us even when He hated us; for He hated us, as such as He had not made us; and because our iniquity had not wholly destroyed His work, He could in each of us both hate what we had made, and love what He had made.” S. Aug. Tr. 110. in Ev. Joh. §. 6.

He loved us, if we be Christ's, before the foundation of the world, with an everlasting, unchanging, love, unchanging as Himself; He loved us before He made us, loved us when we had marred His work, in so far as we were His, not what we made ourselves, and we might be restored, loved us before He gave His Son, and so as to give His Son for us. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "God commendeth His love toward us, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." What depth of moral misery can be so loathsome, what so utterly fallen in our eyes, as our whole race in the pure Eyes of God? What dare a sinner shrink from, as being hopeless sinfulness, when Christ, foreknowing our hardness of heart and neglect of His calls, and often backslidings, still loved us, and took "the likeness of our sinful flesh?" Who of us would not have perished, had Christ withdrawn His love for that same deep sinfulness, the shew of which keeps back a delicate love? Christ died for us, being in ourselves hateful, that we might be such as God could love; He died for us, though we have again wasted the price of His Blood. We then must love all, Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics; all however fallen or staining the Christian name; all, outcasts from men and mere human sympathy, "in highways or hedges," "streets or lanes of the city;" yea, we must love them the



more, would we have a Divine love, because they are shut out from all love but God's. Can we do no more, it is much love to pray for sinners, that we, ourselves, "the chief of sinners," may be saved with them. And if any speak evil of us, or do evil, revile, vex, us, these we must love with an especial love, lest we unawares cease to love them. Could any malice be so great as our evil against our God?

2. True love must be a self-denying love. "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-Begotten Son." "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." What if God knowing our weakness, calls us not now to this, shall we do nothing? Have we no witness to bear that we are Christ's disciples, because He calls us not to shed our blood? As though to stop such excuses, the Apostle goes on<sup>f</sup>, "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. *But* whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth

<sup>f</sup> "Whence doth charity begin, brethren? Ye have heard wherewith it is perfected; the Lord also set forth both its end and measure in the Gospel; (S. John xv. 13.) but ye ask, how can we have this charity? Do not despair hastily of thyself; perhaps it has had its birth, but is not yet perfected; nourish it, that it die not.—We have heard wherewith it is perfected, hear we wherewith it begins! It follows, 'Whoso hath this world's goods, &c.' Lo! where charity begins. If thou art not yet equal to die for thy brother, yet be equal to giving of thy means to thy brother." S. Aug. in loc. Tr. 5. §. 12.

the love of God in him?" Were it much, even to die for them, for whom, with us, Christ died, that we might live with Him? But now He asketh us no hard thing; He pities our weakness; He leaves us life, nay, if we will, comforts even, indulgences, much which our sickness, or sickly wills, make needful to us. Blessed they, whose hearts He kindles to part with these; but at least let not such of us as are weaker make our weakness our boast. Some cross at least He bids us take, in some things to deny ourselves. The first step to receive the love of God, is to empty the heart of the love of self<sup>g</sup>. Cast out self from self, "the love of the world and the pride of life," and God will fill thee. He invites us lovingly, nailed to that dreadful tree, clothed but with the thickened Blood which He had poured forth for us, emptying Himself of all, even of the Blood of His All-loving Heart. He calls us lovingly, to bear our Cross for Him, for He will by the bitterness and shame of His, make ours full of unspeakable sweetness and glory.

3. True love, like the love of God, "seeks not its

<sup>g</sup> "There are two loves, of the world and of God; if the love of the world indwelleth, there is no entrance for the love of God; let the love of the world depart, and that of God indwell.—When thou hast drained thy heart of earthly love, thou shalt drink in the love of God; and now beginneth love to indwell, from which no ill can come. Wouldest thou have the love of the Father, to be coheir with the Son? Love not the world. Shut out the evil love of the world, that thou mayest be filled with the love of God. Thou art a vessel, but as yet full; out-pour what thou hast, that thou mayest receive what thou hast not." S. Aug. in Ep. Joh. Tr. ii. 8. 9.

own." He needed us not, to create us; He could gain nothing to the fulness of His love and blessedness, wherein through all Eternity He reposed in the love of His Coequal Son, in the Spirit Who is Love. Being above Being, Wisdom above all Wisdom, Beauty above all Beauty, Brightness above all Brightness, and wholly Love, yea Himself all these and all Perfection in one, and all infinitely, what could He need of us, Who by His very Nature needed nothing, Himself the boundless Object of all-perfect Love, loving and loved infinitely, unceasingly, unchangeably, endlessly, in Infinite Love! And yet He went forth, (to speak reverently,) out of Himself to love us. He formed us, redeemed us, God became man, in order to pour into man some portion of the Infinite Ocean of His love, losing not His own Fulness, nor yet receiving aught of men. How could He receive of us, when all of ours is His? And so He willed our love should be, for it is His love. Not then, (as our way too often is,) reflecting on ourselves, dwelling on our deeds, taking pleasure in them, counting upon them, glad, for our own sakes, to have them known and remembered. This is to love ourselves, not man or God. True love is to love simply those to whom we do good, because they are or may be God's; to love them, because God loves or may love them, and they God; to love them the more, if we have done them any good, because God came to us in them, to receive in them some little portion of our poor love, Himself to return it



with His own Everlasting Love: it is to long to pour ourselves forth in love, if we knew how, because He hath so loved us, and in these He Who loved us infinitely, willeth to be loved.

4. True love, like the love of God, must be ceaseless. All created being liveth through His Love. "All live unto Him." The all-embracing flow of His love circleth through all Creation, carrying every where life and gladness and light and joy unspeakable, ever flowing, never retiring, unless repelled, full in all, according to their measure, as though there were none beside, yet by its One Omnipresent Love binding all in one and to Himself. His love is every where, because it is Himself, and "there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." It fills the countless Heavenly host and the spirits of the just, and each thrill or pulse of love, or calm absorbed rapture in Him, is of Its ceaseless Presence, ever going forth, yet ever full, and filling all with Its fulness. And with us, more marvellous yet, waiting to find entrance, pouring itself around us this way and that, if at last It may find some crevice in our stony hearts, whereby we may admit Him, the everlasting Joy of the Blessed. So then our love, if it be indeed of that "fire," which He, our Redeemer, the Sun of our souls, "came" on earth to "kindle," must be no flickering flame, burning brightly for a while, fanned, it may be, and quickened by some passing gust of feeling, and then dying down the more as though exhausted; but it must burn on within us, as a consuming fire, glowing,

kindling, burning out all self-love, until nothing remain within but the love of God, or of man in God. That passing, capricious, love, love and unlove, ebbing and flowing, laid dry because it has just seemed full, loving one and not another, grudging fresh acts of love, because it has just shewn what it thinks such, "soon wearied of well-doing," such is not the love which reflects the love of God, not the love which has the promise that it "shall have boldness in the Day of Judgment, because as He is, such are we in this world."

My brethren, as we trust that God in His mercy is more present in our Church than heretofore, so it is one of the surest tokens of that Presence, that there are more self-denying deeds of love. For where He is, there must love be, since He is Love. Yet they are but beginnings. It is the day-break, the Morning Star; the dawn, we may hope, of a brighter day, and of the fuller presence of the Sun of Righteousness. Now we must still speak of negligence. It is, we must all sadly own, a sign of decayed love, that in this parish, which when less peopled had its five Churches<sup>h</sup>, two only are left, or

<sup>h</sup> The Church of the Holy Trinity and four Chapels. 1. At Westercombe, dedicated also to the Holy Trinity (destroyed). 2. At Heaynton, dedicated to S. Mary (destroyed). 3. Of S. Nicholas, (entire, but desecrated). 4. S. Wardrede, at Legh, (of late years replaced.) All these remained in 1439. The last enlargement of the Parish Church was in 1321, at the remonstrance of Bp. Stapledon, when the Church "was zealously lengthened beyond even the Bp's injunctions." (Rev. Mr. Oliver's Eccl.

one might say another<sup>i</sup>, once used for God's service, now for man's, as a beacon how our forefathers loved and served God, and we neglect Him. Of old, they who for us occupy their business in the great waters, ever found here in the house of God a haven for their souls; now, that at once, whole months through, there may be 400 here, they see, as they enter, no trace of the house of God, except that wherein their forefathers worshipped, which we have desecrated. Yet even these are few. In your own homes, perhaps 2000<sup>k</sup> are, year by year, shut out

Antiq. of Devon, p. 134.) The only additions since have been some galleries, almost useless, if not worse.

<sup>i</sup> The restoration of the Chapel of S. Nicholas, beautifully situated on a rock at the entrance of the harbour, would not only remove a profanation, but might facilitate the revival of a pious practice very lately, if not now, kept up in the neighbourhood, where the fishermen regularly assembled in Church, before they went out for the week's fishing. For the inhabitants it is too small. The light at the summit of the tower was maintained, all winter through, "gleaming as a star by night," as an act of charity to mariners, while the Chapel was still hallowed. Veysey's Register, vol. ii. fol. 13. (14 April, 1522.) [furnished by the Rev. Mr. Oliver.] "It was a place of special devotion and thanksgiving, especially for mariners and others who had been saved from shipwreck, as well as of pilgrimages." [Id. from Bp. Lacy's Register, vol. iii. f. 134.] It also appears to have been endowed, since (as Mr. O. has remarked,) "among pensions still paid to Incumbents of Charities, A. 1553, there is mention of one at 'Ilfracombe, to Jeffry Clapper £3, (who was not the Vicar.)" [Willis, Hist. of Abbies, t. 2. p. 67.]

<sup>k</sup> The population of Ilfracombe is counted at 3,700. The Church holds 800, (excluding the useless portion of the galleries.) The calculation of providing for one third is now acknowledged to be inadequate in any population; much more in towns, where hardly any need be hindered from being both at Morning and Evening Prayer.

from the Church, the home and mother of all. It is no sign of a Divine love, that two years have passed away, since the Minister first pressed upon you the need of another Church for the poor of Christ, and as yet not one-fifth of the sum required has been raised. I blame not. I would but confess our common negligence. You who live here, have, week by week, been the objects of the care and love of God; He has supported, blessed, prospered you, has given you your yearly or weekly incomes; others have come to share your air, for refreshment, health, as it may be, of wives or children; this Church has, to the great loss of those for whom it was built, been open to us; they have come and gone; and the result of all is a sum, which, but as a beginning, I should be ashamed to name<sup>1</sup>.

These things ought not so to be. We, my brethren, who, whether here for a shorter or a longer time, should but for the bond of Christian love be strangers, have no right to enter this Church, which is open to us only through love, and leave it as strangers. We come Sunday after Sunday, and, if God gives us the hearts, daily also, and hope to have gained a blessing, the pardon of sins we daily confess, gifts of grace, the loving-kindness of our God. And yet this our gain is purchased by others' loss. The Church, far too small for its own people, is, whether by our fault or theirs, or both, shut to many of them, while we are here. It may be, they give up their rights willingly.

<sup>1</sup> £300.



If it be not out of indifference to their own souls, they have more love for us, than we for them; if any are tempted by this world's profit, we are doubly unloving to tempt them to sell their souls. In winter they come here; now, they do not or cannot. One third of this Church (and this same evil is through our carelessness repeated again and again) is, Sunday after Sunday, filled by us to whom it belongs not, and they to whom it belongs are shut out. For myself, could the evil have thus been remedied, or had there not been a worse, or might one not in any degree help to remedy it, I could rather have stayed or gone away altogether, than thus join in shutting out from God's House those whose heritage it is. We can only come here with a safe conscience, if we aid really, according to our means, to provide for others. We dare not hope that an unloving coming will be acceptable to God Who is love.

This is of debt, not of love, not to shew great love, but not to be very unloving. Yet what is done out of love, whether debt or free gift to man, all is alike debt to God, all is alike accepted of God as the free service of love. All actions of life may and ought to be wrought out of love; love sanctifies penitence, sorrow, joy, kindness, severity<sup>1</sup>, fast,

<sup>1</sup> "This brief precept once for all is given thee, 'Love,' and do what thou wilt; if thou be silent, be silent out of love; if thou speak aloud, speak aloud out of love; if thou correct, correct out of love; if thou spare, spare out of love; be the root of love within, from that root nothing but good can spring." S. Aug. in Ep. Joh. Tr. 8. §. 8.

feast, faith, hope, alms, obedience, prayer ; where it is, there is all besides ; as where it is not, all besides is worthless, for where it is, there is God, and He owns the presence of His own Grace, and accepts all love, not for the worthlessness of our poor gifts, but for the worthiness of His own Gift of Love, which He has given us in His Son, and for the sake of the Son of His Love.

It is a joy to speak and think of love. The very heart bounds at the name. It speaks of such unutterable sweetness, of being bathed and bedewed and overflowed with the tender mercy of our God, of being admitted into His secret Presence, face to Face, eye to Eye, to gaze on Him as He Is, to lose ourselves there in the boundless depth of His Essential love, to put off ourselves that we may be clothed with Him, immersed in, filled, satisfied with, the fulness of Uncreated Love. It is, "what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived," to be like God, "for we shall see Him as He Is." "Sweet is the name of love," says a father<sup>m</sup>, "but more sweet the deed." "My little children," says the Apostle, "let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Not in word but in deed did The Father love us, when He gave His Son to die for us ; not in word but in deed did God the Son love us, when He laid aside His Essential glory and wedded Himself to our shame ; not in word but in deed did He love us,

<sup>m</sup> S. Aug. in Ep. Joh. Tr. 8. init.

when He humbled Himself to the Death of the Cross, and, as He hung there, our sins pierced Him more sharply than that awful bloodstained Crown of Thorns, or those rending Nails. And shall we then for ever go on this broad beaten way of self-indulgence, loving the world and the things of the world, pleasures, tables, furniture, dress, ornaments, luxury, finery, all the things which shall be burnt up, thinking nothing too much to spend upon ourselves or to gather for our children, unashamed to have been so long so unlike Christ, Who hath so loved us that we might in our brethren love Him? For who will say that not only the want of this Church might not on this very day be supplied, but all other wants of the poor in this place might not be at once easily removed, did we place our God where we set ourselves, His Kingdom and His Righteousness first, ourselves last; would each or even many give out of the ability which God hath given them? Rather let us consider our ways, fix at least some portion, which shall be always God's<sup>n</sup>; if we have children, it was counselled of old<sup>o</sup> to count Christ as a member of our families; to receive Him,

<sup>n</sup> " Let us give a portion. What? A tenth? The Scribes and Pharisees did this, for whom Christ had not yet shed His Blood. Yet I cannot keep back what He Who died for us said, ' Except your righteousness, &c.' Consider what ye do, and with what means ye do it; how much ye give, and how much ye leave for yourselves; what ye spend on mercy, what ye reserve for luxury." S. Aug. Serm. 85. (35. Oxf. Tr.) §. 5. (more at length.)

<sup>o</sup> S. Aug. Serm. 86. (36. Oxf. Tr.) §. 13. p. 289.

Who for us became Man, as it may be, as our second, third, fourth, child, and so give to Him, in His poor, the portion of one child. For would He not be "more to us than ten sons?" If He have provided for any of our children with Himself, then, if we may, let them have their portion still, laid out for God's service<sup>p</sup>. He will keep it well for us. Must we, for the health of ours, increase expense by sojourning away from home? be part of the expense to leave a blessing behind us, an offering to our God. If we saw Christ plainly in our midst, receiving our alms, looking on as we cast in our gifts into His treasury, we *could* not refuse *Him*, we *could* not give sparing gifts, with cold or grudging, self-satisfied hearts, as though we *could* give much when giving to Him, our Redeemer and our God. Yet where is our faith, if we see Him not now where He says He is? Where our longings for Him, if on each occasion or deed of love, we feel Him not nigh, and our heart burn not within us, and we dread not to miss Him, or that He stay not with us? Where our love, if our hearts are for ever pent within this ceaseless round of self and sense, what our eye craves, what the flesh demands, what the petty pride of life and station exacts, and cannot burst forth out of ourself, and all these gilded, tinsel, bonds which hold us, and be joined unto Him, heart to Heart, think on Him, dwell in Him, until, by His Spirit, our love be in our degree one with His,

<sup>p</sup> S. Aug. Serm. 86. (36. Oxf. Tr.) §. 11. 12. (very strongly.)



and we long at least to love all, “*as He loved us,*” “because He first loved us,” with a self-sacrificing love? He Who called to S. Paul, yet unconverted, from heaven, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me,” in those His members, calleth to each of us as truly, by the vast misery in this His own land, by that worst homelessness, of the houseless outcasts from the Church of God, He calleth to us, if we would hear, in our inmost hearts, “Why neglectest thou Me?” Shall not we too say, “Lord, what wilt Thou have us to do?” and then “arise, and stand on our feet, and do it.” Shall we have abundance of all things, and our Lord be in want?<sup>1</sup> Think we Whose we are, members of Him, God and Man, crucified for us; our Hope, His own Everlasting Love; our fears, to be shut out from His Love, where all is hate; think we of those All-gracious words, “Enter thou into the joy of the Lord,” and that *they* only shall hear them, who have done deeds of love; think we of those dreadful words, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,” and that those who hear them shall not know till then, that in neglecting the poor and sick and hungry and thirsty and strangers and destitute, they had despised their Lord Who, on earth, was such as they, and then as we would, (it is the word of God,) “have boldness in the Day of Judgment,” let us seek to be in this world “as He is,” love one another as He has loved us, deny ourselves, that we, through His grace and love, may gain Him, and (as the source of all) pray for loving

<sup>1</sup> S. Aug.

self-denying hearts, that unlearning our selfish unloving ways, we, as He has promised, “dwelling in love,” may “dwell in God, and God in us.”

Oh! blessed Only Saviour, happy they who have left all to follow Thee, to be where Thou art, to sit down on Thy throne, to taste of Thy sweetness, to gaze on Thy Beauty, to be filled with Thy unimaginable Love. Draw us, Lord, that we may run after Thee. Look down as from Thy Cross on us, Who wouldest draw all unto Thee. Kindle, soften, break our hard cold hearts, that we be ashamed to be so unlike Thee. Fill our faces with shame, that we may seek Thy Face. Give us of that love, wherewith Thou lovedst us, that we, loving Thee in Thy members, may be loved of Thee and owned of Thee, and enter into Thine Everlasting Love, Who with The Father and the Holy Ghost art One God, to Whom be blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and power and might for ever and ever. Amen.

O God, Who hast prepared for them that love Thee such good things as pass man's understanding; Pour into our hearts such love toward Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

S. MATT. xviii. 5.

*Whoso shall receive one such little child in My Name,  
receiveth Me.*

THE Mystery of the Incarnation has changed every thing upon earth, and encompassed us with mysteries as with blessings. How should it not? Were it not far more strange that that overwhelming Mystery should stand alone, should yield no fruit, should not wrap us round and round with awful mysteries, and heavenly gifts, and Divine love, changing earth into Heaven, darkness into light, death into life, giving us more than an Angel's nature, since God became man? For what is Heaven and light and life but the Presence of God? What Angels, but only pure ministers of His? But now He hath vouchsafed to us a nearness to Himself, which He gave not to Angel or Archangel. What He gave not to Michael, the Captain of the Heavenly Host, to whom He gave power to cast forth Satan out of heaven, nor to the Angels who ever stand before Him and behold His Face and are filled with His glory, nor to the Seraphim, who, ever kindled with the fire of His love, live in continual nearness of contemplation, nor to any of the Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers, Who fill the court of Heaven, that He has bestowed upon us, the last and lowest of His rational creation,—and that, when fallen. “He took not on Him the nature of Angels, but He took on Him the seed of

Abraham." In His unutterable humility, He passed by all which was pure and holy and obedient; in His awful justice He passed by the fallen spirits, and came to us, in ourselves of all the last, and now having on us that loathsome taint of sin, by which we were steeped through and through, so that we had no soundness left, He took us, "the likeness of our sinful flesh," our very flesh, Himself without sin. "The Word became Flesh."

Most of us have heard so often, my brethren, and have prepared ourselves so little, year by year, fitly to celebrate this Divine Mystery, when placed before our very eyes, and we might almost see our Lord "for us men and for our salvation, come down from Heaven" and become a little Child; we so little meditate, that this deepest depth of Divine mercy affects us but little, and love waxes cold, and other faith becomes unsound, because people have never filled their minds with the belief of this. Of old, the Church, when it uttered the words of the Creed, "And was Incarnate of the Holy Ghost," fell down on its knees to worship Him, bowed down to the earth by the sense of His boundless love and gracious lowliness. It sunk, adoring, to the earth at the thought of the awful mercy of its God. For think we what it is, as far as we have thought, and the Church guides us to think. He Who in all eternity had been blessed in Himself, He Who knows no change, Is That He Is, Who can receive nothing, for all come of Him, to



Whose Bliss in Himself, whereby the Father loved the Son and the Son the Father in the Holy Spirit, there can be no accession, since He is Infinite and Unchangeable, He not only vouchsafed to make us, but He took us unto Himself. He Who is Perfect God became Perfect Man, and now, (mystery of mysteries,) has taken our manhood into God, made it one with Himself, never to be parted from Him, not lost, as in the Ocean of His Divinity, but for ever glorified, filled, in-oned with God. Nearer and closer than any union, with a nearness, inferior only to that Oneness of the Divine Nature, is the oneness of our nature with that of God in the Person of our ever-blessed Redeemer<sup>a</sup>. Above Angels and Principalities and Powers, is this our Human Nature glorified in God, with that glory which the Son had, before the world was. Would, my brethren, instead of speaking, we could for ever worship and gaze and love, until we too, with S. Stephen, if but for a moment, might see Him Who once hid His Godhead in our Humanity, now, with His glorified Wounds which for us He bore, His Manhood existing, counited inseparably with His Godhead, in the unapproachable Glory of God.

Can there be a greater mystery yet? To us, at least, it seems as though the way in which it was, made it yet greater; His sacred Birth and Childhood. For He created not simply the Nature Which He took, or joined His Divine Nature to It

<sup>a</sup> S. Bernard de Cons. v. 8.

at its birth. He Himself “abhorred not the Virgin’s Womb;” He, in His unutterable lowliness, shrunk not from the humility of our birth of shame. He Who fills heaven and earth emptied Himself, and confined Himself within the womb of a pure Virgin; He Who spanneth the Heavens, lay with His outstretched but those the helpless arms of infancy, already enfolding us in His love; He Who “carrieth us from the womb” was Himself borne; He the Eternal Word, Who giveth speech to all, lay speechless; the Wisdom of the Father, seemed to grow in wisdom; He, “the Power of God,” seemed powerless, while yet by the word of His Power He upheld all things.

Were this mystery deeply impressed on our souls,—I say not now how it must change all our thoughts, how it must make us hate our pride, and our self-will, our carnal desires, our covetousness, our self-love, when we saw Him “Who is over all, God blessed for ever,” for love of us, lowly, and helpless, and poor, denying Himself the Glory which was His, and taking our misery, which alone is ours, but—how could any other mystery seem strange? How should any thing seem too great or too hard for Him, or too humble for His Love? The mysteries of His Sacraments, the In-dwelling of His Spirit, His unspeakable oneness with the soul which receives Him, “even as” He “and the Father are One,” His dwelling in those who are His, and their’s in Him, His espousal of the soul, what are they but

the overflowings of that first mercy, “the Word became Flesh?” He took our human nature, that He might, as Scripture says, “make us partakers of His Divine ;” He joined our Manhood to Himself, that He might join us on, one by one, to Him, might by His Sacraments impart Himself to us.

So has the mercy of God turned our loss into gain. Blessed indeed was Adam before his fall, sinless, passionless, free from our weary strife, clothed with a robe of heavenly righteousness. Yet what his bliss to ours if we be Christ’s? What although ours be as yet in hope only, what to ours, to be one with Christ? What, even that our lost innocence to the gift of Christ to be our Righteousness? What, freedom from strife, to victory through the Spirit Which dwelleth in us? What, to be sons of God as creatures, to this our sonship by being very members of the Eternal Son? What were the Father’s love for a spotless creature, to that love wherewith He loved us that He gave the Only-begotten Son to die for us, and now, if we be His, loves us in the Son of His Love.

Fix we then our thoughts once more on the cradle of Bethlehem; behold we Him once more, already loving us, but unable to express that love; come to bear the Cross for us, but as yet borne of others; in all outward seeming, except that ineffable Majesty of His sinlessness, and that Divine Holiness—yet in all outward seeming like one of us, helpless, speechless, motionless, swathed (so Scripture says) as

other infants, poor, destitute, lying in a manger;—yet He is Very God! What amazingness of mercy can make us doubt God's bounty, when God the Son, to save us, thus “emptied Himself,” and made Himself as nothing?

Nay, can we think that Holy Scripture thus told us of the Sacred Childhood of Jesus, and meant us not to reverence childhood? Does not the saying of an early father<sup>a</sup> commend itself to our conscience, that “our Lord passed through all ages to sanctify all, and to infants was made an Infant, sanctifying infants; in little ones a Little One, sanctifying those of this same age, and becoming to them further an Example of piety and righteousness and subjection?” Does the Church's belief that her little ones are temples of the Holy Ghost stagger us any longer, through the greatness of the gift, when He Who became a Little One in the manger for our sakes, was the Very and Eternal God? Can we otherwise than, for love of JESUS, reverence, and love, and yearn over, and cherish these little ones? Feel we not, (at least if we be not deadened by this world's vanities,) a drawing forth of our inmost heart towards them, a tender love, a reverence for them, which, alas! we cannot have for ourselves, and often not for others of riper years? The childhood of Jesus, and their recent birth of God, the impress of His Hands<sup>b</sup>, and the sealing of His Spirit, the

<sup>a</sup> S. Iren. 2. 22. 4.

<sup>b</sup> See St. Cyprian, Ep. 64. ad Fid. §. 3. p. 197. Oxf. Tr.



fresh invocation of the Name of the Holy Trinity upon them, and their own freedom, for the most part, from grave actual sin, the presence, may be, of "their Angels" who "do always behold the Face of their Father in Heaven," win from us a reverent love, unlike any thing besides in this our corrupted world. The children of the Church are, save her Saints, the purest ornament with which God hath clothed her; they *should be* her chiefest care.

Since then in the Infant Jesus, "the Child" Who was "born unto us," our senses had only misled us, neither must we, by sight, judge of those who are His. Faith, in the Wise Men and the Shepherds, saw and worshipped; "His own" to whom "He came, received Him not." In His own Royal birthplace, the Lord of Heaven and earth lay, an outcast, gazed upon with longing wonder by the Heavenly Host, and the whole Choir of celestial spirits, who sang "Glory to God and on earth peace," but on the earth, which He came to redeem, adored only by His Virgin Mother and His reputed father, else observed by none of all that throng who were gathered to Bethlehem, or observed only, alas! to be already rejected and cast out, as one for Whom "there was no room." His only attendants, besides, on earth were the rude cattle, less rude only than we, the ox and the ass, emblems of our untamed or rebellious nature, yet owning more than we "their Master's crib." He, thus unheeded, was Very God; and think you not He sent

<sup>c</sup> Isaiah i. 3.

back with a blessing the Wise Men who offered Him their gifts, and the poor Shepherds, who had only pure hearts to offer Him, sent He them not back with heavenly warnings and joy of heart and a speechless blessing? Carried they not, think you, back in their hearts the Infant they had seen, Him “Who was born to them a Saviour, Christ the Lord?” and “having Christ in their hearts by faith, rooted and grounded in love, they knew the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and were filled with the fulness of God.”

And so, in their measure, is it with these members of Christ now. The world is too much taken up with itself to care for them, too full of its own business and thoughts and pleasures, to heed them. Although in them it might receive its Saviour, it has no room for them amid the busy restless throng of curious, sensual, carnal, eager, thoughts, which, ever coming and going, fill the narrow mansion of its soul and cast out its Lord. Faithlessness sees in them nothing great, only the weakness and the fault of nature, which they have from us. Faith alone sees in them the germ of their heavenly birth, the implanted life of God, the cleansed and purified soul, and around them, their protecting Angel, who beholds their Father’s Face in heaven. And receiving them, it receives their Lord.

There may then be a still more mysterious, yet literal, sense of those great words, “Whoso receiveth one such little child in My Name, receiveth Me.”

To tame our pride of understanding or knowledge, or wealth, or rank, He took an especial nearness to infants and the poor. The mysteries in which He would be thought on and worshipped, are His Birth as a helpless Child, His Death, stripped of His very raiment, having nought His Own, "a scorn of men, and an outcast of the people." "The poor of Christ" then, and "children" have a special likeness to Him. They are not only His, (as each of us hope to be,) but they have His mark set upon them. The poor have His "livery:" they are what He was for our sakes in outward lot. Children, as yet unspoiled, have not His likeness only, but His indwelling Spirit; for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." He dwelleth in them according to their measure and halloweth them, and so, "Whoso receiveth them in His Name receiveth Him," because he receives them in whom Christ Himself dwells by His Spirit, and who have not as yet, by actual sins, grieved Him away.

Great then and awful is the trust, confided to us in those His lambs, amazing His blessing in it. He has made them His, set His seal upon them, given them the first-fruits of His Spirit, made them to us, another Himself. "He has taken them up in His Arms, put His Hands upon them, and blessed them," and so has given them back to us, to cherish them for Him, feed them with His heavenly food, guard them that they stray not; teach them how to "keep themselves," by prayer and watchfulness, and self-rule, and leaning upon Him, "that the Wicked One

touch them not;" teach them to "know His Voice" within them, that they may "follow Him," and He the good Shepherd, may lead them forth to the Everlasting pastures.

On us, it may be, their everlasting doom depends. They still have the freshness of Divine grace; they are still what He made them and He has declared them,—not taken only into an outward covenant, or made members only of a visible body, but—"by nature, children of wrath," they are, by virtue of His Birth in the flesh, children of God, born of God through grace, as He was born from everlasting by Nature, members of Himself, clad with Himself, ("for as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ,") coheirs with Himself, temples of the Holy Ghost.

Such are they. But what may they be? One shrinks to say, my brethren, so must one yearn over these little ones, for whom Christ died, in whom He yet dwells. Yet, if we except those who through our grievous negligence, have lived and died, yea now live and die, as actual Heathen in this our Christian land, all who have done or are doing deeds of darkness had once on the robe of light, all among Christians, who have perished or are perishing, slaves of the world, of the flesh, of Satan, once were free; all whom Holy Scripture calls "the children of the wicked one" once were made "children of God." Sin after sin crept upon them; the gift which was in them was never perhaps stirred up; neglected childhood gained no strength against the increasing



temptations and passions of youth; well alas! often is it, if neglected parents become not, by example, or more grievous still, even by words of ill, tempters to sin of their own neglected children, their very guides to hell. One must out of charity speak what one shrinks from; heirs of heaven, they might be of those miserable beings, whose everlasting abode is hell; for the seal of God on their foreheads, they might receive "the mark of Cain and of the beast;" children of God and members of Christ, they might become children of the devil and members of Satan; the hearts and souls which God had cleansed to contain His Holy Love, His Blessed Spirit, to receive heavenly visitations, and hold communion with Him, if their fences be broken down, all avenues to sin opened with opening years, what should be, but what every day is, that evil rushes in like a flood, masters their minds, the "evil spirit takes seven others more wicked than himself to dwell there," and what was once (as He has said) the dwelling-place of the Trinity, becomes "the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

It is an awful thing to speak of God's judgment upon sins in which we bear part; for we seem to condemn ourselves. Yet "if we indeed condemn ourselves, so may we not be condemned of the Lord." "If" our Church "at least in this her day, know the things which belong unto her peace," so may she yet not "be laid even with the ground and her



children within her<sup>d</sup>." A heavy countless debt of guilt lies upon our Church and nation, for our manifold neglect. Must it not be said of us, "My sheep are scattered, because there is no shepherd, and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered; My sheep wandered through all the mountains and upon every high hill, yea My flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them." And reap we not every where the bitter fruits? We need not dwell on others' sins; we need, alas! but open our eyes on the whole length and breadth of our unhappy land; we need but go "into the streets and lanes of" our cities or our towns, our places of concourse, our market-places, our ports, our mines, our manufactories, every place where human souls are gathered together, see what is the habitual object of their thoughts, and ask, Is this "a people, which hath the Lord for their God?" Would that one must not say our very Churches, and there while our eyes miss the best heritage of a Church, "the poor of Christ," feel that "unless the Lord had left us a small remnant, we had been as Sodom, and been like unto Gomorrah." I seem, in saying this, to have said but nothing. There is in this Christian land, such an intensity of sin and misery, such awful depth of wickedness and forgetfulness of God, that to know but some slight portion of it, (I speak in plain words,) makes the head reel and turn dizzy, and the heart faint. But that we do not yet see the

<sup>d</sup> Gospel for the day.

unseen fires, one might of many places ask, Is this a Christian land or is it hell<sup>e</sup>? And these are our neglected children, so that the very Sacrament of Baptism becomes a witness against us, if we first make them lambs of Christ, and then leave them to Satan to devour.

A better day, we trust, is dawning. God is stirring men's hearts, and when He is in the midst of us and looking upon us, we may hope all. Yet "what" still "is the chaff to the wheat?" I hardly know which makes the heart most faint, to think of what is done, or what is undone. The few we have gathered, only bring the more heavily before us the thought of the millions yet scattered. It is but "as the gleanings-grapes, when the vintage is done." "All they that go by pluck off her grapes. The wild boar out of the wood doth root it up; and the wild beasts of the field devour it." "Turn Thee again, Thou God of hosts, look down from heaven, behold and visit this vine."

In this very place, there are, at least for a season, many who have means, who come here for refreshment, or for the health of their children or their own, and who, one might hope, would have thoughts for other little ones of Christ. Yet here, those in this town, who receive daily education, are not one-seventh, and even with those whose only day of teaching is the day of rest, are not more than

\* The writer had partly in his mind a book founded on Parliamentary evidence, "The perils of the nation;" but day by day brings to light some fresh intensity of unChristian unsanctified misery.

one-fifth of the whole number. Those now neglected by all alike, but who might be gathered up, had we a deep love for Christ Who for our sakes became a Child that these children might be His; those now brought up in idleness, educated for sin and Satan and not for God, are at least five hundred. And this number of twice-orphaned children, neglected of their parents, and of their Mother the Church, is ever filling up again and again; neglected childhood grows up into sinful youth, sinful youth decays into hardened age; the miserable tale is renewed again and again, of souls for whom Christ died, by our neglect lost. And yet, as happened very lately, and you felt it for a while, these children are more exposed than others, to untimely ends. It was a shock to you that three in one moment sunk out of our sight, to give their account<sup>f</sup>; it was some comfort that one had been trained very hopefully in your school. Yet what is such sudden death but a faint image of what is happening daily, hourly, somewhere in this our boastful land? "The sea shall give up the dead which are in it;" who shall rescue those who through our recklessness sink into the lake of fire?

My brethren, for this fearful evil I ask not for some scanty alms this evening; I ask not even for abundant alms, although they would be given to Christ, and repaid by Him. I ask, in His Name, your thoughts, your time, your hearts, to think on

<sup>f</sup> A whole family, father, mother, and three children, had recently been lost at once, at sea. Very many of the boys, at about twelve, are employed with their fathers in fishing.

this great evil at your very doors, and then your prayers to be guided how to remedy it, or to help those who may, that the blood of these children be not required at your hands. And may God guide you. To give alms alone, to educate any how, is not to receive little ones in Christ's Name; the blessing is too great to be obtained by such costless means. To receive children in Christ's Name is not merely to cause them to be gathered into schools; they who can help no otherwise have the blessing of God, if they help to this; but were this all, harm might be done, not good; it is not to teach them any how, or by teaching them only to read and think, to put into their hands a two-edged weapon, wherewith to destroy themselves; it is in our Church's words<sup>g</sup>, to "teach them what a Christian ought to know and believe for his soul's health," and "to lead a godly and Christian life;" in a word, to "believe truly and live holily." This cannot be as we now act. Children cannot, as our way is, teach children faith and holiness, nor can the single teacher of each school suffice. Our schools must fail of their end, until ye give, not your money only, but, as far as ye may, yourselves also. Let us believe our Lord's words in earnest; seek ye to love Him, long to requite Him Who gave His life for you, to Whom ye owe yourselves, and He will teach you what ye can do. Some perhaps might give themselves wholly; some might form institutions for that most perilous age, when female children leave such schools as we now have;

<sup>g</sup> Exhort. at the end of the Baptismal Service.



some might give at least an hour or two in the day, to teach Christ's little ones, collect perhaps some six or seven, (as other claims permit,) each as your own peculiar charge, and so while many, first training themselves, joined in this good work, ye might by God's blessing, impart to them the reverence, and fear, and love of God, ye would cherish in yourselves; teach them how to fight the good fight ye yourselves wish to wage; adapt yourselves to them, one by one, as ye come to know them, form each as its own soul needeth<sup>h</sup>. Only whether we visit the poor or Christ's little ones, it must not be as superiors, but with great inward reverence for Christ, not as though it were some great thing, but in humility: not only to teach them, but (as our Lord gave them us for an example) to learn of them; not as unto man, but as seeing Christ in them; so becoming like them, "yours shall be the kingdom of heaven" which He has promised to such as they; so ministering unto Christ, ye shall yourselves "receive Christ."

Yes! my brethren, great as are the things of which

<sup>h</sup> Our Church Catechism obviously furnishes every occasion we can want for such individual guidance; the explanation of the Creed, for teaching the poor, (what they are so very capable of,) meditation on the Mysteries of the Faith and the Person of our Blessed Redeemer; that of the Commandments and the summaries of our duty to God and our neighbour, leads at once to the enquiry how they are to know whether they keep them, and so to help them to learn self-examination; the exposition of the Lord's Prayer to form them in habits of devotion, teaching them the manifold application of that Divine Prayer in connection with all seasons, all Mysteries, all their needs, deliverance from each sin, peril, temptation, or growth in grace.



I have spoken, there is yet one meaning of those blessed words, "Receive Me," nearer to ourselves. Great were the favour and loving-kindness to us, if our Blessed Lord vouchsafed to accept our offices done to these little ones, *as* done to Himself; if He put them, (to speak reverently,) in place of Himself, and told us, "whatever toil or care or self-denial thou layest out on these little ones, I will repay thee, as though thou gavest it to Me." Much indeed, yea every thing were it, that He should repay our slight earthly toils and pains with everlasting rewards. But as the reward of the righteous is no created thing, no bliss, no sight, no beauty, no glory, no knowledge, not even love in itself, but it is God, so according to this life's measure, is it now. Our Lord puts us not off to some distant day or a distant reward; He saith not "shall receive," but "receiveth" now; not "a reward," but "Me." By ministering to His poor and His little ones in His Name, we "receive Christ," not without us only, in these His images, but, as alone we can indeed receive Him, within us. Our Lord restraineth not His gracious words, "receiveth Me." He meets the longing of our hearts. We would do something for Him Who hath done all for us. We would gladly, outwardly too, shew our love to Him Who hath so loved us. But "our goodness reaches not to Him." He is in Heaven, we on earth. All things, even ourselves, are His. Yet would we? He grants it. When He said, "Me ye have not always," He said too, "the poor ye have always with you;" when He

Himself ceased to our eyes to be in the midst of us, He placed a little child in the midst, and said, "Whoso receiveth one such little child in My Name, receiveth Me;" as though He said, "Receive My poor and My little ones. Thou shalt not merely entertain Angels unawares, as My servants did of old, but thou shalt receive the Lord of Angels, thy Redeemer, thy God, thy everlasting Reward, Myself." It is not a figure; it is not a reward out of Himself, it is Himself He promiseth. One dares not compare duties or graces, as though we might cherish one and perform the one and neglect the other; yet while humility must be the groundwork of all we do, and God Himself our only end, there is no deeper source of blessing, no more frequent means of enlarged grace to the soul, than love for Christ's sake, to His little ones and His poor. It has been found so. They who have carried on the greatest designs for God's kingdom, have found His greatest blessing rest upon them, through love to these; they who have received and tended them for Christ's sake, have found that, becoming, through His grace, like them, they have "received Christ;" He hath formed Himself within them; He Himself hath taken them, as it were, up in His Arms, and blessed them; He Who is our Salvation, hath come not under their roof only, but through His Spirit to their souls. Blessed, thrice-blessed they who, for love of Christ, and having Him Alone for their portion, have or can give their lives to minister to these, and cherishing them, orphans, or poor, or ignorant, are cherished by

Him, Whom through them they receive, the Father and Mother and Husband of their souls; but blessed in their measure, all who, in whatever degree receiving them, receive Him, and receiving Him are received by Him, our only Hope, and Stay, and Abiding-place.

Fix we then our thoughts, for one little moment more, on the Manger at Bethlehem; view we Him there, our Lord, our Creator, our God, stretching out His Hands towards us, the Hands which were to be nailed to the Cross, and telling us that He became that Little Child, that we might for His sake love little children, receive them as Himself, and in them receive Himself, and then, as we would wish our own thoughtless childhood, or the sins we shared with other children, forgetful of ourselves and the Gift which was in us and them, to be forgiven; as we would wish to receive our Lord; as in that awful "Day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be manifest," our sins laid bare, and our everlasting doom fixed, we would wish to be received by Him; Remember we His sacred Childhood, and for His Sake, now and ever, by prayers, by alms, by active self-denying deeds of love, remember children.

Now unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own Blood, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

## NOTE.

SINCE the Sermons have been printed, the writer has been kindly furnished with the form of prayer used every Monday Morning at Clovelly, the place alluded to p. 21, during the fishing season, from Michaelmas to Christmas. The form must come down with hereditary Episcopal sanction. The Morning Service is used with the exception of the "special" portions here substituted. The appointment of an Epistle and Gospel is thought to imply that the Holy Communion was once celebrated then. The whole is a happy token of what might be done to sanctify, by the Services of our Church, the employments of her poor.

Proper Psalm, the CVII.

Proper Lessons, { First, Habakkuk III.  
                          { Second, St. John XXII.

## THE COLLECT.

Almighty and loving Father, who dost govern all things, in Heaven, in Earth, in the Sea, and in all deep places! There is no creature but hears and understands and obeys Thy voice! Thou speakest the word and the stormy winds arise, and again Thou commandest and there is a great calm. Have mercy on these Thy servants in their honest calling upon the Sea! Assuage the winds, subdue the waves, and let them go forth and come in with safety. Protect their persons, secure their vessels, and all that appertaineth unto them, and let not the hair of any man's head perish. They may like Thy disciples toil night and day and catch nothing, but if Thou art pleased to speak

such a word as Thou didst then, they may encompass such a multitude of fishes as neither their nets nor their vessels can contain. But let all be done according to Thy good pleasure, O LORD! Whether many or whether few, blessed be Thou for all! Only, we beseech Thee, let not our sins withhold good things from us, and therefore pardon us our former transgressions, O Merciful LORD, especially our murmurings and our boldness, our profanation of Thy Holy Day and Thy Blessed Name, our intemperance, our hatred and strife one with another, and grant that we may make such a just, wise, and holy use of these Thy blessings as shall be to our comfort and the glory of Thy Name. Make us, O LORD, to consider that we prosper more by Thy Providence than our own industry, and that Thou canst with one word send all these blessings to another shore, and to another people that shall serve Thee better than we. And, O Gracious LORD, teach us to remember the utter uncertainty of all our lives, and how easy it is for Thee to raise a blast or to send a wave, and to dash us against a rock, and to cast us into the depths of the sea. Grant us therefore, O LORD, while we do live to live in Thy fear, and whensoever we die, to die in Thy favour, through Jesus Christ our LORD. *Amen.*

FOR THE EPISTLE,  
The Epistle for the Fourth Sunday after Easter.

FOR THE GOSPEL,  
The Gospel for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

The Old Hundredth Psalm is sung at the proper place.

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